

by minimizing the role of the federal bureaucracy. As many of my colleagues know, an increasing number of health care providers have withdrawn from the Medicare program because of the paperwork burden and constant interference with their practice by bureaucrats from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (previously known as the Health Care Financing Administration). The MSA program frees seniors and providers from the this burden thus making it more likely that quality providers will remain in the Medicare program!

Mr. Speaker, the most important reason to enact this legislation is seniors should not be treated like children and told what health care services they can and cannot have by the federal government. We in Congress have a duty to preserve and protect the Medicare trust fund and keep the promise to America's seniors and working Americans, whose taxes finance Medicare, that they will have quality health care in their golden years. However, we also have a duty to make sure that seniors can get the health care that suits their needs, instead of being forced into a cookie cutter program designed by Washington-DC-based bureaucrats! Medicare MSAs are a good first step toward allowing seniors the freedom to control their own health care.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to provide our senior citizens greater control of their health care, including the ability to use Medicare money to purchase prescription drugs by cosponsoring my legislation to expand the Medicare MSA program.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING
PROFESSIONALISM AND PER-
FORMANCE OF THE U.S. DELEGA-
TION TO THE 53RD ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE INTER-
NATIONAL WHALING COMMIS-
SION

HON. WILLIAM D. DELAHUNT

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 2, 2001

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, an often overlooked hallmark of our democracy is the smooth transition of power from administration to administration. This seamless transfer is made possible only through the dedication and hard work of countless numbers of career Federal employees. Often underappreciated and maligned by the public, these career bureaucrats effectively carry out the day to day functions of the Federal Government for the benefit of the American public both at home and abroad.

In this respect, the recent performance of the U.S. delegation to the 53rd Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in London exemplifies the type of excellence in public service for which we can all be proud. Considering that several highly contentious issues came before the plenary, the Bush administration is to be commended for sending nothing less than a topnotch team to London. And I applaud the decision of this administration to maintain longstanding U.S. policies that uphold the responsible protection and conservation of the world's cetaceans, especially large whales. Strong U.S. leadership will be vital to thwart future attempts to reverse global whale conservation measures put for-

ward by pro-whaling nations as part of their determined strategy to undermine the IWC. This administration must remain vigilant, and a very brief summation of the issues that arose at this year's meeting will help explain why.

Perhaps the most contentious issue which emerged in London was the proposal by Iceland to rejoin the IWC. In 1992 Iceland, a whaling nation, withdrew from the IWC in part due to the adoption by the IWC of a global moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986. Iceland intended to rejoin the IWC this year but with a reservation against the moratorium. While supportive of Iceland rejoining the IWC, the U.S. delegation strongly, and rightly, opposed the reservation arguing that it would have established, if accepted, a harmful precedent with significant repercussions affecting the adherence of treaty obligations by nations under virtually any international agreement. Such a precedent could severely disrupt the framework of U.S. foreign policy.

Iceland was re-admitted but denied voting rights in the plenary, a decision which sparked significant controversy. Undoubtedly, hard feelings generated in the plenary will linger. Yet the administration was correct in its position. And while it is important for the administration to attempt to restore amicable relations with the Government of Iceland, it should remain clear in communicating its opposition to Iceland's reservation against the global moratorium.

Another item of controversy was the maintenance of lethal scientific research whaling conducted by the Government of Japan in the Southern and North Pacific Oceans. Since 1987, Japan has exploited a loophole in the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) to maintain whaling under the auspices of self-administered scientific lethal whale research permits in the Southern and North Pacific Oceans. Over 700 minke whales have been taken annually. In 2000, Japan expanded this program to include sperm and Bryde's whales; both species are listed as endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

Japan's recalcitrance in the face of world opinion to continue this lethal research whaling—a practice which the IWC's own Scientific Committee has ruled consistently to be unnecessary for the management and conservation of whale stocks—led to the Clinton administration's decision last year to certify Japan as in violation of the Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protective Act, and to consider retaliatory economic sanctions on Japanese fishery products. The 68 members of Congress who have agreed to cosponsor my resolution, H. Con. Res. 180, strongly oppose such "scientific whaling," and we very much appreciate the decision of the Bush administration to join us in robust opposition to this illegitimate scheme.

Newer and much lower abundance estimates for Southern Hemisphere minke whale populations helped persuade the IWC plenary, led by the U.S. delegation, to again pass this year a resolution condemning Japan's controversial research and calling on Japan to refrain from continuing these programs. But regrettably, Japan appears unwilling to discontinue or even scale back this illegal whaling contrivance. Should the Japanese decide to again move forward, the administration should re-certify Japan as in violation to the Pelly amendment and this time impose real

sanctions. The administration should also continue to engage with Japan in the development of new and better non-lethal scientific methods to obtain data to study whale populations.

Another issue adroitly handled by the U.S. delegation was the emerging question of whether the decline in some global commercial fisheries is linked to a corresponding increase in the consumption of fish by recovering whale populations. In its efforts to justify the resumption of commercial whaling, Japan has postulated a simplistic theory: world fisheries are depleted due to increased foraging by increasing numbers of whales. Moreover, this theory is used conveniently by the Japanese to justify the necessity of its lethal scientific whaling programs. Recently, Japan and other nation's have promoted this concept in other international fisheries organizations, such as the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization's Committee on Fisheries (COFI). This tactic has raised concerns within and outside of the IWC that the organization is being undercut in an area within its competence.

The U.S. delegation rightly maintained that the competition claim is grossly oversimplified and biologically unsound. Nevertheless, the U.S. delegation considered it necessary for the issue to be held within the IWC—the one international organization recognized for the management of whale stocks. As a result, while remaining emphatically opposed to lethal scientific whaling and skeptical of the competition theory, the U.S. delegation prudently reached agreement with Japan on a resolution, subsequently adopted by the plenary, that lays out how the IWC will address the question of competition between whales and fisheries in the immediate future. In essence, this resolution acknowledged the competence of the IWC in this area and urged the IWC to engage with FAO and other regional fisheries management organizations to initiate relevant ecosystem-based, holistic and balanced research to investigate this theory.

Representatives of the environmental community objected to this strategy arguing that it legitimized "junk science" and that it was an ill-advised concession to Japan. And time might very well verify those concerns. But at the moment, I agree with the decision of the U.S. delegation that accurate, balanced and non-lethal scientific research offers perhaps the best opportunity to expose the scientific flaws and gaps of this questionable theory once and for all. The U.S. must maintain a strong presence on the IWC Scientific Committee and in the activities of other regional fisheries management organizations to ensure that objectivity is maintained.

I commend the U.S. delegation for its continued efforts to develop a consensus for a Revised Management Scheme (RMS) to govern the future governance of whaling. The U.S. delegation rightly maintained that the RMS must be addressed comprehensively, and not through a piecemeal approach. Despite the fact that little progress was made to resolve difficult issues concerning transparency, supervision and control, the U.S. delegation remained engaged with all nations in an attempt to bridge differences. What has become clear is that the lack of progress on the RMS rests squarely on the shoulders of the pro-whaling bloc led by Japan and Norway, and not on the U.S. and its like-minded allies.